financial support to the credit agencies operating in the drought hit districts of Orissa during 1996–97 to enable them to provide conversion facilities to the affected farmers. Based on the "annewari" declared by the State Government. Orissa State Co-operative Bank (OSCB) had processed applications for conversion of short term agricultural loans availed by about 1.45 lakh farmers for sums aggregating Rs. 46.88 crore. NABARD has sanctioned a sum of Rs. 28.10 crores to the OSCB on behalf of 16 District Central Co-operative Banks (DCCBs), being 60% of the total conversion effected at the ground level.

NABARD had also increased the refinance allocation from Rs. 116 crore to Rs. 136 crore in favour of OSCB for financing Seasonal Agricultural Operations (SAO) during the year 1996–97 to meet the additional demand for fresh finance on account of drought in the State. This allocation was fully availed by OSCB. For tne year 1997–98 also, an allocation of Rs. 165 crore has been made to facilitate the bank to maintain the growth in agricultural advances.

(c) and (d) As per the instructions issued by Reserve Bank of India (RBI)/NABARD, the co-operative banks and Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) are required to provide relief to the borrowers affected by natural calamities by way of conversion of crop loan dues of the affected borrowers into medium term loans repayable over a period of three years. Such borrowers are also provided fresh finance to carry on the agricultural operations. As reported by NABARD co-operatives in Orissa have already converted crop loans aggregating Rs. 46.88 crores into medium term loans and provided fresh finance of Rs. 46.38 crores during Rabi 1996–97. RRBs have also taken steps to convert the loans of borrowers affected by natural calamity to enable them to avail fresh finance from the banks for their agricultural activity.

Establishment of Steel Plants by MMTC

631. SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Mineral and Metal Trading Corporation (MMTC) has diversified its activities;

(b) if so, whether the establishment of Steel Plants in some parts of the country is a part of its diversification programme;

(c) if so, the States where Steel Plants are proposed to be set up by MMTC;

(d) the locations identified for the establishment of those steel plants;

(e) whether any such site has been selected in Orissa; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. As a part of its diversification programme, MMTC is setting up joint ventures in the State of Orissa for manufacture of iron and steel products and metallurgical grade coke.

(c) to (f) The steel plant is being set up by MMTC in the State of Orissa. The steel plant is located at Kalinga Nagar, in Duburi, Distt. Jaipur, State of Orissa.

Legal Reforms

632. SHRI ANANT GUDHE : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of various legal reforms measures undertaken so far, expenditure incurred thereon, practical utility thereof and future course of action to be taken in this regard;

(b) whether the Government have decided to set up an Expert Committee on legal reforms;

(c) if so, the composition, terms and conditions of this Committee;

(d) the issues that have been referred to this Committee; and

(e) the time by which the Committee has been asked to submit its report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) to (e) Legal Reform measures are undertaken by different Ministries/Departments which are administratively concerned with different laws. However, Government has recently reconstituted the Law Commission of India with a specific mandate regarding review/repeal of obsolete laws. The terms of reference of the reconstituted Law Commission in this regard include, among other things:—

(i) To identify laws which are no longer needed or relevant and can be immediately repealed;

(ii) To identify laws which are in harmony with the existing climate of economic liberalization which need no change;

(iii) To identify laws which require changes or amendments and to make suggestions for their amendment;

(iv) To consider in a wider perspective the suggestions for revision/amendment given by Expert Groups in various Ministries/Departments with a view to coordinating and harmonising them;

(v) To consider references made to it by Ministries/ Departments in respect of legislation having bearing on the working of more than one Ministry/Department; and

(vi) To suggest suitable measures for quick redressal of citizens grievances, in the field of law.

Stock Option Scheme

633. SHRI SURESH PRABHU : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Reserve Bank of India currently has permitted remittance of only US$ 750 to Indian employees of subsidiaries of multinational companies to exercise stock options in such multinational companies;

(b) if not, the current amount permitted for this purpose;

(c) the total annual outflow of foreign exchange in connection with investments to be made by Indian companies in foreign ventures/offices; and

(d) the total annual outflow of foreign exchange in case Reserve Bank of India had permitted Indian employees of subsidiaries of multinational companies remittance facilities to exercise their stock options in full?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b) Employees in India of branches/offices/wholly owned subsidiaries of foreign companies are allowed remittance of US$ 750 in a block of five years for acquiring the shares of foreign companies.

RBI have decided to enhance the ceiling of US$ 750/- to US$ 10,000/- in a block of five years and extend the above remittance facility to the employees of Joint Venture Companies with majority foreign share holding, *i.e.* 51% and above.

(c) The total annual outflow of foreign exchange for investment made by Indian companies in joint ventures abroad is as under:—

(Amount in US$ in million)

	Cash	Exports	Loan	Total
April 1996 to March, 1997	197.583	16.472	0.420	214.475

(d) RBI has allowed about 1500 employees of subsidiaries of multinational companies to exercise stock option (share purchase) in such multinational companies. However, the exact amount of outflow of foreign exchange in this regard is not available as the remittance is made through various authorised dealers and options decided by the concerned employees.

Textile Mills in U.P.

634. SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether several textile mills in Uttar Pradesh have been sick and are on the verge of closure;

(b) if so, the details about performance of these sick mills and the steps taken during the last three years to stabilise the functioning of these mills and to improve their standard by modernisation and the details of funds allocated for this purpose;

(c) the details of the action plan prepared for the revival of these sick units; and

(d) the number of such units which are likely to be closed down in the near future and the details of action plan formulated for the rehabilitation of workers?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALLAPPA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government has set up the Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) to inquire into the working of sick industrial companies and to prepare and sanction, as appropriate, schemes for revival of mills. 35 cases stand referred to the BIFR from Uttar Pradesh as on 30.9.97.

(d) The BIFR has recommended winding up order in respect of 17 cases.

The Government has established Textile Workers Rehabilitation Fund Scheme to provide interim relief to workers rendered jobless due to permanent/ partial closure of mill.

Concessions for Sports

635. SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to grant tax concessions for sports infrastructure and sponsorships; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b) At present deductions are available to the sports associations and sports personnel u/s. 10(23), 35AC, 80RR, 88 and